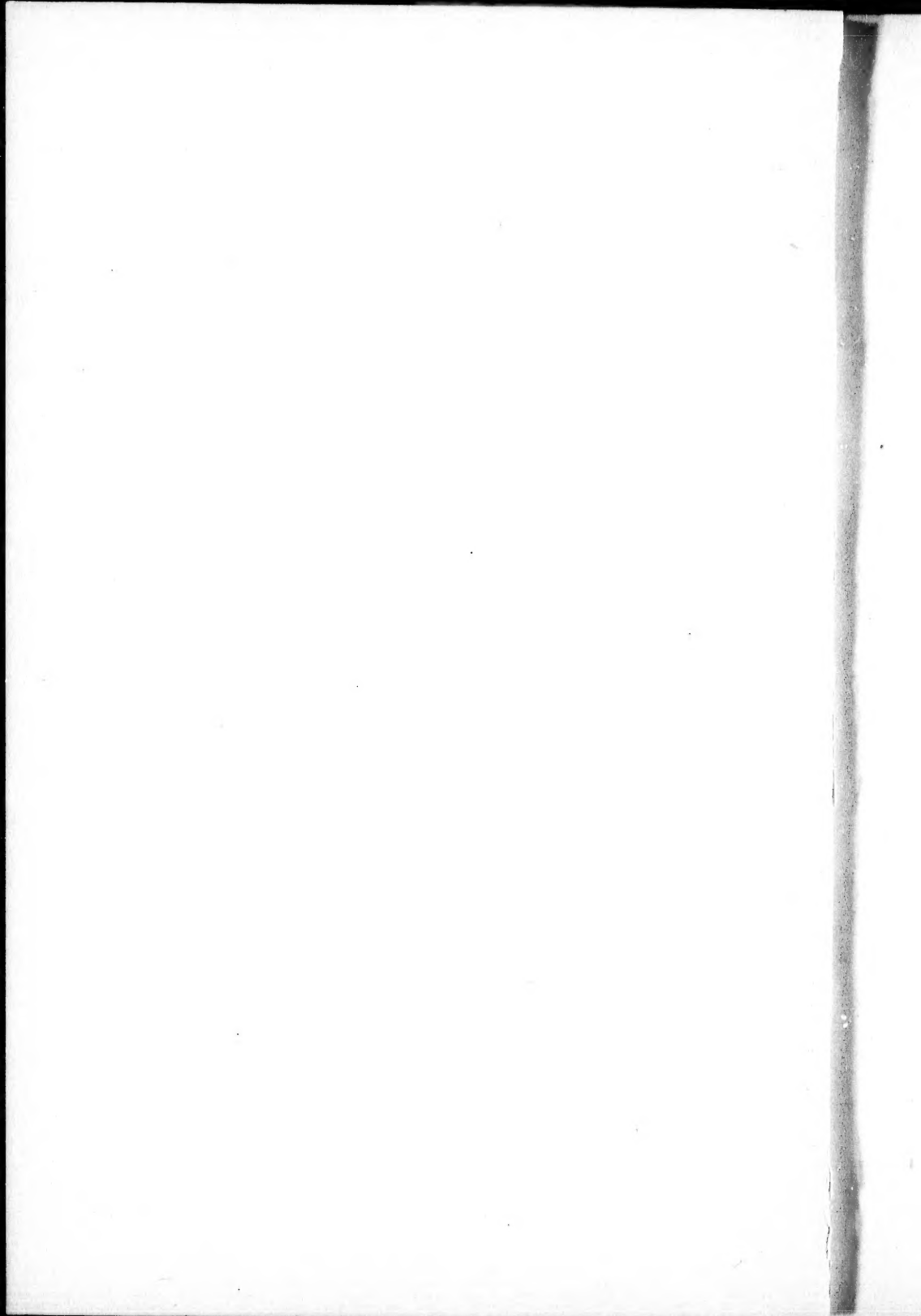




IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

*FOUR LETTERS ON THE DEVELOPMENT
OF ITALIAN ART*

BY
EMELINE A. RAND

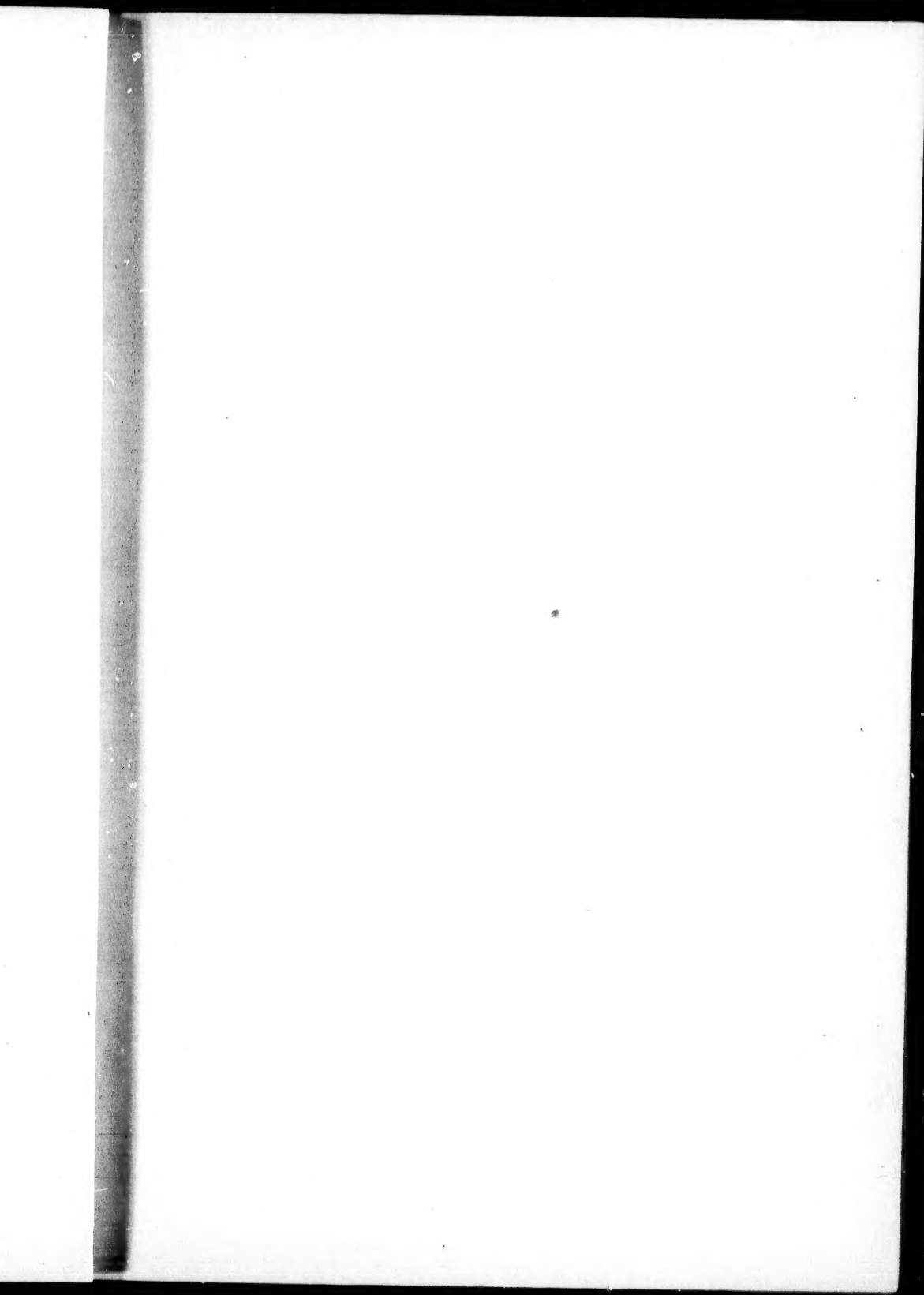
TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS

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TORONTO, *November 26th, 1894.*

MRS. EMELINE A. RAND,
17 Madison Avenue,
TORONTO.

DEAR MADAM :

It occurs to me that the letters contributed by you to *The McMaster University Monthly*, entitled "In the National Gallery, London," should find a wider circulation. They seem to me admirably adapted to awaken interest in a subject of which Canadians are indifferently informed. With your consent I shall be glad to issue them in a neat and cheap form for general reading.

I am,

Yours respectfully,

WILLIAM BRIGGS.

17 Madison Ave.

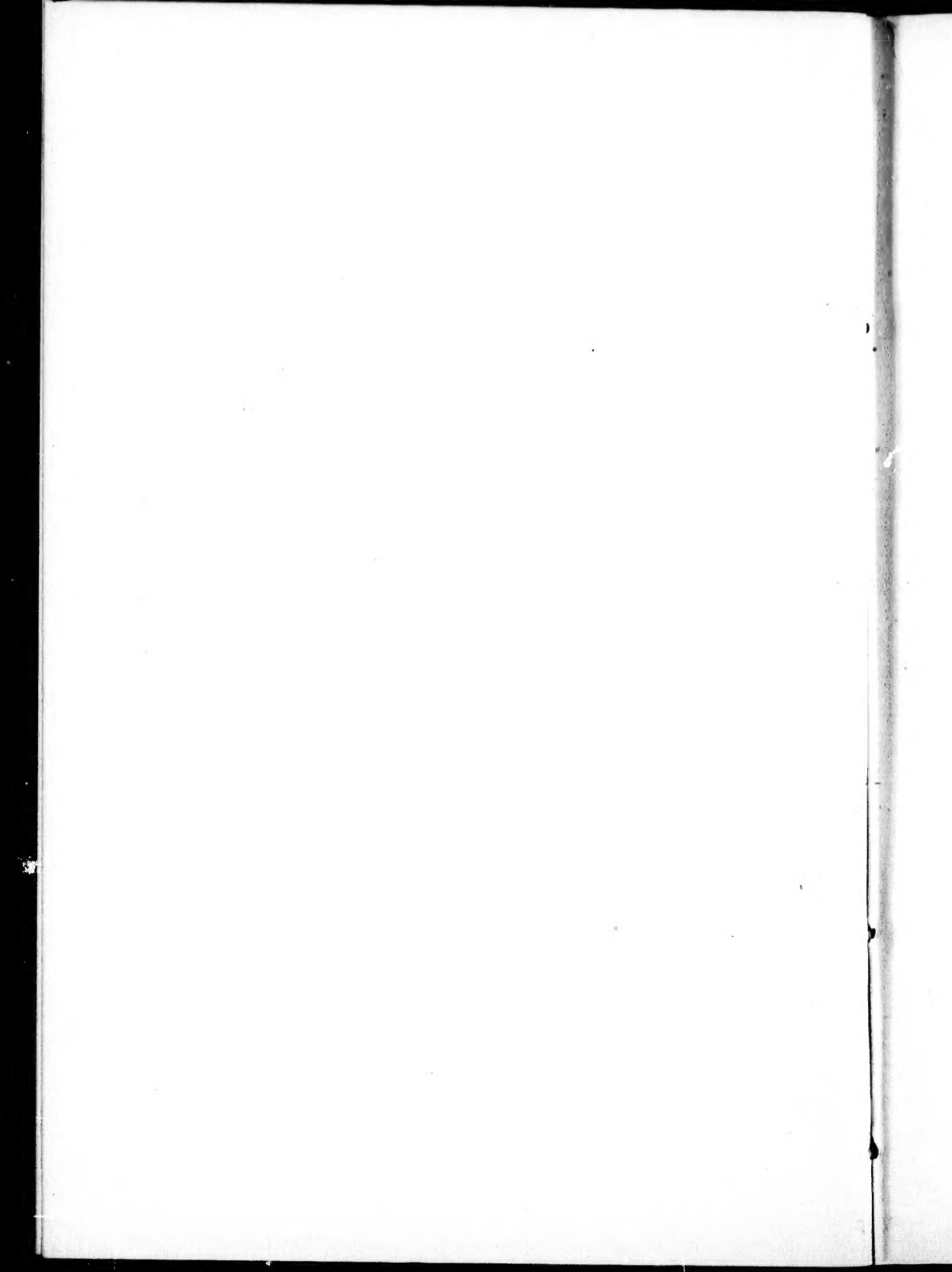
Dear Sir,

It would be ingrateful in me not to acknowledge your kindness and courtesy by consenting to the proposal conveyed in your note. The letters were not written to present original views, but simply to give an orderly and brief popular account of the development of Italian Art from its dawn to its noonday splendor, and at the same time convey such information as seemed adapted to stimulate readers of the *McMaster University Monthly* to a fuller acquaintance with the subject.

You are entirely at liberty to use them as you desire.

Dr. Briggs,
Methodist Book
and Publishing House,
Toronto.

Very truly yours,
Emeline A. Rand



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In the National Gallery.

NOTES OF PICTURES AND PAINTERS.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I do not wonder that you have asked me to share with you some of my visits to the National Gallery. I remember the remark of a friend who was giving an interested audience some word-pictures of what he had seen and experienced in dear Old England: "I would like to spend a year by the National Gallery." Realizing for myself the wish which he expressed, I sought how best to profit by the privilege. I visited the Gallery repeatedly, going through its twenty-two great rooms, whose walls are so closely covered with paintings, eager to see and learn all I could of

the wonderful works of Art, but almost invariably I left the building with weary brain, tired eyes, aching neck, and confused ideas of the treasures on which my eyes had rested. The memory of your own hurried visits to the Gallery will, I doubt not, confirm my experience. Feeling sure that there was a better way of obtaining even an imperfect knowledge of these works of the Masters, I decided to study them historically. In this way I learned, as one cannot from books only, how, step by step, each school of painting has advanced, and how few artists in different countries through the long centuries have been able to produce works of such value and merit that they have become a heritage and joy forever. Following this clue, the Gallery became to me a Walhalla of spiritual struggles, blessed memories, ennobling histories, an Elysium of delightful and peaceful thoughts, a very witchery of sweet fancies and uplifting imaginations; and I found myself treading its spacious rooms more softly and reverently, as their scenes grew upon me in beauty and power.

Of course you will not expect me to depict the memories of beautiful forms and colors. In studying the works of a great artist, we

naturally wish to know something of the life which found expression at once so beautiful and imperishable. I shall, therefore, speak as often of the artist himself as of his work, and as I consult my notes for historic facts you will, if at all like myself, find the web I weave made more luminous and instructive thereby.

I began at the beginning, that is, with the earliest Italian painting in the Gallery. It is a gaunt, forbidding-looking Madonna, but of great interest in the history of painting. The artist, Margaritone, 1216-1293—we are told by Vasari, in his history of Italian Art—was the last of the Italian artists who painted entirely after the Greek (or Byzantine) manner, which was purely conventional, with but little attempt to paint things in a life-like way. Their paintings were mostly symbolic; certain symbols or attitudes were understood to mean certain things. For instance, the young Christ is here represented standing with the assumed dignity of an adult. As he raises his right hand to bless the faithful, with his left hand he holds the roll in which are written the names of those who are saved. It is as a judge that He comes into the world. This symbolic, conventional style of work, which Greece gave to Europe, was the

model for the earliest Italian painters. They gradually broke away from it. After learning to see nature truly, they had to learn how to represent what they saw in relief, showing one thing as standing out from another; in perspective, showing things as they look instead of as we infer they are; and, in illumination, showing things in their colors under different lights. It is very interesting to notice among these old paintings the gradual advancement made in these three things which are the bases of all good painting. A marked advance in these is seen in the Madonna and child by Cimabue—a Florentine artist 1220-1302. This painting, though somewhat crude-looking and a good deal defaced by the fingers of Time, shows a decided increase in pictorial skill—seen in the shading of colors rather than flat tints. The expression also is more pleasing, both in mother and child, and quite a successful attempt has been made to substitute for the conventional image of an ideal person the representation of real humanity.

From Cimabue we naturally turn to find some specimen of work done by his most celebrated pupil, Giotto. Here it is, just a bit of old fresco, which had been a part of a series

of paintings illustrating the life of John the Baptist in the Church of the Carmine, Florence, destroyed by fire in 1771. I was glad to see even this bit of the great painter's work,—he who did so much to develop real art from the rigid, stilted, conventional style that was called art. The fragment is two heads of apostles, bending sorrowfully over the body of John the Baptist. Giotto was born in 1276, near Florence. The story told of him is that when he was a shepherd boy tending his father's sheep he was amusing himself by drawing with chalk on stones the favorites of the flock, when Cimabue, the greatest Italian painter of his time, came upon him. He was so attracted by the boy's rude drawings that, gaining the consent of the boy's father, he adopted him, took him to Florence and taught him all he knew of his art. Giotto was an apt pupil and rapidly developed into a most successful painter, as well as sculptor and architect. When Pope Boniface VIII. called for specimens of skilled work with a view to selecting a painter to decorate the walls of St. Peter's, Giotto was asked to send a specimen of what he could do. He, apparently with indifference, with one flourish of his hand made a perfect circle in red chalk and sent it as his

contribution. It was accepted, and he was chosen. This incident gave rise to an Italian proverb, "As round as Giotto's O." Giotto was a great friend of Dante, to whom, it is thought, he owed some of the inspiration and grandeur of his fresco painting. Dante wrote of his friend: "Cimabue thought to lord it over painting's field. Now the cry is Giotto's, and his name eclipsed." Giotto's character is said to have been that of a high-spirited and independent man, full of strong common sense and ready wit. A story is told of him that when working for King Robert, of Naples, the king, watching him at his work one very hot day, said, "If I were you, Giotto, I would leave off work and rest myself this fine day." "So would I, sire, if I were you," replied Giotto.

Though the National Gallery can show only this fragment of his work, Florence, where he lived, worked and died, has many beautiful and treasured specimens. The famous Campanile, or bell-tower, over the dome of Brunelleschi at Florence, is his design; and he made also the models for the sculpture. He did not live to see this great work completed. It was finished by his pupil, Taddeo Gaddi. Giotto died in the year 1336—"No less a good Christian than

an excellent painter," says his biographer. He sleeps in the same church with his teacher and foster-father—the Church of Santa Maria del Fiore. Ruskin says that Giotto cast away all the glitter and conventionalism of earlier Art, declaring that the sky was blue, the table-cloth white, and angels, when he dreamed of them, rosy—in fine, he founded the schools of color in Italy.

I should say a word about Taddeo Gaddi, the most celebrated of Giotto's pupils. There is really nothing of his in the Gallery, but there are two pieces done by his pupils and marked "School of Taddeo Gaddi ;" one, The Baptism of Christ, the other The Company of Saints, both, I think, intended for altar-pieces. Neither of them are very striking, though full of interest as belonging to the beginnings of art. Giotto must have taken an early interest in his pupil, for when he was christened Giotto held him at the font. Though he was his best pupil, he failed to carry out in full his teacher's instructions, and, in a measure, copied the imperfections of the Byzantine School—noticeable in the works of his pupils mentioned above. But he was, like his master, a great architect as well as painter, and, as I stated before, finished

the work of the Campanile, begun by Giotto. His finest pictures are in S. Croce, Florence. He was born in 1300, and died at the age of sixty-six.

The revival of art in Italy was largely due to the preaching of St. Francis and St. Dominic. Many churches were built, and the walls were frescoed with Scripture scenes, which were to the people, who could neither read nor write, a sort of illustrated Bible. The work, in these early days, was done on wood or plaster. Before oil was used for mixing colors, water, egg or fig-juice was employed. This was called "tempera," in English "distemper."

I must mention another name that stands out clearly among this group of early Florentine artists—Orcagna. His real name was Andrea di Cione, but he was given the former name by the people of his time. It is a corruption of Acagnuolo, meaning the Archangel. He was born in Florence about 1315. His father was a goldsmith; the son was, like most of the Italian painters, a sculptor and architect. This union of arts he sometimes denoted by signing his pictures, "The work of Orcagna, sculptor;" and his sculptures, "The work of Orcagna, painter." His great legacy is in the Campo Santa of Pisa.

The chief picture of his which the National Gallery possesses is an altar-piece, in ten compartments. It was painted for the Church of San Pietro Maggiore. The central piece represents The Coronation of the Virgin. Among the adoring saints on the left is Peter, holding a model of this church in his hand. The painting contains upwards of a hundred figures. It is quaint and almost uncouth, but, like other early attempts, it is full and expressive in detail. There is a beautiful soft blending of colors, still rich in hues and tints, and the whole is wonderfully interesting as a study. It is of interest to note that he designed the famous Loggia de' Lanzi of the grand ducal palace at Florence.

Let me mention here another great artist, who belonged to this period, though there is nothing of his work in the Gallery. He, too, was an architect and sculptor, Andrea Pisano. His birthplace was Pisa, and, as was common at that time, he took his name from the place where he was born. Many of the art treasures in Italy were preserved by wealthy merchants. They formed what was called "The Merchants' Guild," for the purpose of purchasing artistic products of special merit, and presenting them to the city. This guild, anxious to leave some

imperishable memorial of their interest in art, conceived the idea of presenting to Florence, their beloved city, beautifully-wrought gates for the baptistery of San Giovanni, or St. John, in connection with the great cathedral. They called for designs, and after a good deal of competition the work was entrusted to Andrea Pisano, who modelled a series of beautiful reliefs from the life of John the Baptist. These were cast in gilt in 1330, and placed in the centre doorway. It is said that he attained his wonderful skill and grace by the study of some ancient sarcophagi preserved at Pisa. Nearly a century after Pisano's gate was completed a second one was called for, and Lorenzo Ghiberti, the foster-son of a goldsmith, was chosen out of three competitors to create it. He was only twenty-three years of age, the other two being younger. These latter, Brunelleschi and Donatello, magnanimously withdrew from the competition, declaring Lorenzo Ghiberti to be their superior. All three became famous artists and continued sworn friends till death. On this gate Ghiberti worked twenty-two years and received for it eleven hundred florins. His subjects were taken from the life and crucifixion of Christ. The gate was divided into twenty

panels, ten on each leaf. Below are full-length figures of four evangelists, and four doctors of the Latin Church, with a border of fruit and foliage. This gate gave such satisfaction that he was asked to design a central one that should even surpass the others. For this he took his subjects from the Old Testament, beginning with the Creation and ending with the meeting of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba. He wrought on it over eighteen years, fifty years in all for both. Michael Angelo said "they were worthy to be the gates of Paradise." They are still among the greatest treasures of Florence. There are splendid casts of Ghiberti's gates at South Kensington.

I must close this letter with a word about Fra Angelico, the heavenly-minded Dominican monk, 1387-1455. It is said of him that "he never took pencil in hand without prayer, and he could not paint the passion of Christ without tears of sorrow." His power lies in portraying the sacred affections upon the human face. He denotes a distinction between heavenly and human beings by draping the former in pure colors, and covering them with shadowless glories of burnished gold. His "Resurrection" is in the Gallery. It contains 266 figures, no

two alike in expression or form, but all perfect in grace and beauty, though the representation of Christ is poor and feeble. The angel choirs are very beautiful. He considered himself inspired, and could never be induced to make any change in the products of his brush. In him we see the flower of Giotto's idealism.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—In my previous letter I grouped the earliest Florentine painters as best I could from the few specimens of their art to be seen in the Gallery. Their work exhibits art in its infancy, and wholly under the influence of religious teachings.

As the religious fervor began to cool, the incoming of a new element marks another stage. The revival of classical learning, known as the Renaissance, brought mythology to the front. This gave new subjects and fresh incentive to the expression of beauty. Fragments of fresco and altar-pieces are displaced by easel pictures, denoting the growing desire for home decorations.

Look at this picture, *The Rape of Helen*. It is one of the first in which a classical subject is attempted. It was, doubtless, intended to be the cover of a box, octagonal in form, such as were in common use for wedding gifts. Hence the choice of subject. This panel picture is nearly two feet square, and is done in distemper. An inlet of the sea, a rocky landscape, a small

temple, having a gilt statue of one of the Greek deities—these are the settings. From the temple a beautiful woman surrounded by beautiful women—Helen, wife of Menelaus, and the ladies of her court—are being taken off to a ship by Paris and his companions. Paris, the eager lover, takes giant strides, and the ships seem impatient to speed their errand. The flowers in the foreground are exquisitely painted, but the background of rocks and trees is so unlike anything in nature as to make the contrast almost ludicrous. This unequal finish of natural accessories characterizes the art of the time. This is the earliest picture in the Gallery painted for domestic pleasure and not for religious service. The artist is Benozzo Gozzoli, born 1424. He seems to be the connecting link between the religious and mythological periods. He was a pupil of Fra Angelico, of whom I spoke at the close of my first letter. The only other specimen of his work to be seen here is *The Virgin and Child Enthroned*. It is in distemper, on a wooden panel some five feet square. He was commissioned to make the Virgin similar in mode, form and ornament to one painted by Fra Angelico, which is now in the Florentine Academy. It was further stipulated "that the

said Benozzo shall at his own cost diligently gild the same panel throughout, both as regards figures and ornaments." In most of the Florentine pictures there is a prodigal use of gold, or "glitter," as Ruskin would say. This painting was an altar-piece of the Campagna di San Marco, Florence. It is a fine composition of thirteen figures: five angels with outstretched wings behind the enthroned Virgin and Child; the Baptist, and St. Zenobius in a rich chasuble, on the Virgin's right; Peter and St. Dominic on the left; with St. Francis and St. Jerome kneeling in front. On the steps are two sweet little goldfinches, which seem to be in beautiful sympathy with the scene, of which they form no unimportant part.

Benozzo was the first Italian painter whose spirit was moved by the beauties of the natural world, and the first to enliven his landscapes with animals. His best work is in the Campo Santo, Pisa,—the subjects being taken from the Old Testament. As a mark of their appreciation, the Pisans, in 1478, presented him with a beautiful sarcophagus against his burial in the Campo Santo. He died in 1498.

Contemporary with Benozzo was Fra Lippo Lippi, a Carmelite friar. Five of his paintings

are in the Gallery. Their chief characteristics are rich golden colors and beautiful draperies — his human figures being surcharged with feeling, and his angels like overgrown high-spirited boys. Some day you may read the story of his life, as told with dramatic power by Browning. It is not wholly pleasant reading, nor was it meant to be. Browning is a teacher of high things, and his Fra Lippo Lippi is both text and pulpit :

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave,
 You need not clap your torches to my face.
 Paint the souls of men—
 Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke. . . . No, it's not,
 It's vapor done up like a new-born babe—
 It's . . . Well, what matters talking, it's the soul !
 Give us no more of body than shows soul !
 Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,
 That sets us praising.

Lippi died in 1469, having left the Convent thirty-seven years before. He was once carried as a slave into Barbary by Moorish pirates, and while a captive in chains managed to draw on a white wall a charcoal portrait of his master. This display of his skill procured Lippi's release from fetters, and subsequent exhibitions of his graphic and pictorial power resulted in the

regaining of his liberty. His whole life was a romance.

Here are some eight paintings in distemper, of peculiar richness in coloring. They are, indeed, the richest and also the most fanciful of all the specimens of the Florentine school. Note this Virgin and Child, with the Baptist and Angels. The scene is in a garden. The Virgin is seated with the Child on her knees, and two angels hold a crown over her head. The Baptist kneels in adoration before the divine Child. The Virgin is reposeful and dignified; the children are full of life and action, and the angels are buoyant youths. The trellised rose-hedge in the background—the rose being one of the flowers consecrated to the Madonna by the painters—serves as a delightful emblem of love and beauty,—“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse.” This artist is an inspired painter of flowers, especially of roses, and his name is Botticelli,—1446-1510. His real name was Sandro, or Alessandro, Fillippi. Having been apprenticed to a goldsmith, he adopted his name. He became a pupil of Lippi, and the fulness of human life, blended with religious feeling, which characterizes his work, is manifestly derived from his master. His Madonnas

seem so very human as to appear out of sympathy with the divine Child,—their humanity moving towards a lower companionship than that of which the Infant Saviour is the expression. Perhaps Tennyson derived a hint in this respect from Botticelli's Madonnas, in his representation of Guinevere's desire for a less perfect man than was the divine Arthur.

In the latter part of his life, Botticelli came under the influence of Savonarola, the great Florentine Reformer. Here is his Nativity of Christ, painted two years after Savonarola died. Much of Botticelli's earlier painting was devoted to mythological subjects, over which he throws a great charm. Mars and Venus, and Venus with Cupids, in the Gallery, are interesting examples. Having become an ardent follower of Savonarola, he forsook the field of classical mythology and found his subjects wholly in Biblical history. The Nativity is an inspiring example of his later work. Browning has done much to reinvest the productions of this artist with extraordinary interest.

Thus far I have called your attention to two very marked stages in the Florentine school. In the first—known as the Giottesque—symbols are used. The story is everything, and religious

feeling overtops all. In the second, the artist opens his eyes to the world of natural beauty in which he lives, and tries to paint nature as he sees it,—the naturalistic stage. Here is a picture, The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian, which emphasizes this latter stage as seen in the painting of the human form. How marked are the firm strong muscles in the arms and legs of the executioner! It is very evident the painter took pleasure even in a most painful subject, since it afforded him an opportunity of skilfully displaying, by his brush, his anatomical knowledge. This is the only work of Pollajuolo, 1429-1498, to be seen in the Gallery. He was the first painter who studied anatomy from the dead body, and is a typical representative of the second period.

A third period or stage was the inevitable outcome. Perfection of the technical process of painting, the attempt to heighten form into ideal beauty, and to give it all the energy, grace and life possible—these are the motives which now become operative and find free and masterful play. Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael and Titian are the four great masters of this period, and, indeed, four of the greatest painters whom the world has seen. Let me

clear the way to speak intelligibly of them and their work.

If we walk observantly through several of the rooms we shall see that we have reached a time when many branches or schools of Italian art have come into being. The spirit which so long stirred the Florentine artists has spread over all Italy, and found expression in many schools; among them, the Sienese, Umbrian, Paduan, Venetian and Bolognese; while the Florentine has continued to rise in power and influence, filling Europe with its products. I should like to enter fully into the characteristics of each of these schools and note the representative painters, but I fear I should weary and confuse you. I shall therefore say merely a word or two of these, taking care to mention those names which lead up to the four great masters to whom I have referred.

The Sienese school, especially the work of Matteo da Siena, 1435-1500, while marked by feeling and grace, is noteworthy for its religious emphasis in early art, and for the persistence of this emphasis. Of the Umbrian I shall speak by-and-by. It is enough to say just now that Raphael was its star of the first magnitude. The Paduan, founded by Squarcione, 1394-1474.

a great teacher of linear perspective, was the most learned of all the schools, and the source of the classical and mythological streams. Its treatment of form is also sharp and sculpturesque. Andrea Mantegna, 1431-1506, is one of its great masters, his works being full of old-time feeling. While Botticelli "played with the art of the ancients" and put it to modern use, Mantegna "lived and moved in it." He was one of the first to engrave his own pictures.

The first aim of the Venetian school was with light, shade and color as they have to do with the representation of the human form, simply as form and outward appearance. Coupled with this, necessarily, was the representation of dress, furniture and architecture. In the attainment of this aim the painters of this school, in the judgment of Ruskin, reached perfection. The Bellini brothers, Gian, or John and Gentile, stand out most prominently among the Venetian painters. Their father, a painter also, said "he hoped in God's name Gian would outstrip him, and that Gentile, the elder, would outstrip both." But it was Gian who shot ahead in the race. He was born in 1426 and lived till he was ninety. Venetian art had already its well-defined character for open-air effects. Bellini's pictures, like

most Venetian paintings, are marked by rich and subdued tones, interblended with positive tints and shades, seen through a medium of soft haze,—an atmosphere peculiar to countries washed by the sea. An example is seen in one of his sacred pieces, Christ's Agony in the Garden. The picture is rosy with sunset clouds, the first twilight painting with sunset hues. It is, however, as a portrait-painter that he commands especial attention. The painting of portraits had already been begun in Venice, but he it was who established the art. You have, no doubt, seen portraits of the Doge Leonardo Loredana, under whose rule Venice became one of the Great Powers of Europe. He sat to Bellini for his portrait, which was hung in the ducal palace. It is now in the National Gallery, the original of the engravings so widely circulated. It is one of the most striking pictures to be seen here. I cannot undertake a description of it. For perfection of form, color, light and shade, and consummate technique, I have never seen a portrait to compare with it, nor does it lack in forceful personality. Bellini is one of the greatest of the fifteenth-century painters, showing, even to the end of his long life, increasing knowledge and power. He had a number

of pupils who became famous, among them the great Titian. Bellini's earlier works are in dis-temper, while his later ones are in oil. It is believed he obtained the secret of working in oil from Antonella, a Venetian, who learned the art in Flanders. Bellini, disguising himself as a nobleman, sat for his portrait to Antonella, and thus detected the secret.

The founder of the Bolognese school of painters was Il Francia (Francesco Raibolini), 1450-1517. He was a goldsmith by trade—you will think that all the old painters were goldsmiths first, but there are exceptions!—and after he was forty years of age became famous in Lombardy and Bologna as a painter. One of his three paintings in the Gallery is An Altar-Piece. It is noble in composition and full of artistic grace and power in expression. The Virgin with the Babe, St. Anne offering the Babe a peach—a symbol of the fruits of the Spirit,—little St. John, a beautiful child form, standing at the foot of the throne, bearing in his arms a cross of reeds encircled by a scroll, on which is inscribed *Ecce Agnus Dei*, St. Lawrence with his gridiron and palm-branch, and St. Frediana, are on the right ; while on the left are Paul, holding a sword, the instrument of his

martyrdom, and St. Sebastian bound and pierced with arrows—his anguish rapt away into heavenly beatitude. Pathos is the distinguishing power of Il Francia's brush. This is wonderfully felt in studying the *lunette*, or arch, of the Altar-Piece. It is a *pietà*,—two sympathetic angels with the Virgin weeping over the dead body of our Lord. He is surely dead, but it is the death-sleep of one wearied with most sorrowful and exhausting labor. The picture is suffused with reverence and tender pity, and something of the restfulness and peace which wait on the completion of a great and overmastering life-work. The countenance of the angel at the head has a peaceful expression as of one who knows that it is but a little while till He shall make good His claim, "I am the resurrection and the life." The angel at the feet is sorrowful with sympathy for the bereaved Mother. The Mother lovingly rests the body of her Son on her knee as when He was a child. Her face is tearful and very sad, yet bears the assurance of a well-nigh hidden hope, and a manifest content that heaven conferred on her the honor of being His mother. The picture is instinct with ineffable tenderness,—heaven and earth pouring out their founts of love together.

Are you weary of the "Squint-eyed" Saints and Madonnas, Altar-Pieces and Pietas of the early stages of Italian painting? I should not be surprised if you were. It may comfort you to say that in my next letter I hope to interest you in that period which may fitly be called the meridian glory of Italian art.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—Your words of appreciation are very grateful to me, though you seem to think I am tarrying too long among the Italian paintings when there are so many other rooms to attract one, filled with grand specimens of other schools,—Flemish, Dutch, French, Spanish, and, above all, our English schools, old and modern, of which we are justly proud. I appreciate your eagerness to learn more of these, and it would be very pleasant to tell you what I think of Reynolds' and Turner's pictures, but my aim just now is to give you an orderly and clear outline of the progressive development of the divine art of painting itself. Besides, English art and all modern art have been possible only because of the genius and labor of those gifted sons of light and shadow, form and ravishing color, whose campus was sunny Italy. Let me, then, take my own way through the Gallery and dwell a little on these Italian names, even though it is not possible to have them fully represented on its walls.

I have thus far called your attention to those masters whose works mark off distinct stages or steps in painting. These have given us some idea how much was done in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to prepare the way for the brilliant group of geniuses that brought art to its highest perfection in the two centuries which followed. Think how gradually the fetters of tradition and use were broken and cast aside! How slow the process of working out individuality of form! With what labor access was gained to the secrets of science, and these pressed into the service of art! The fruition of these centuries of experiment and painstaking is at last seen in the works of the four great masters of Italy—Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael and Titian. Milan, Florence, Rome and Venice are the cities where the embodiments of the ideals of beauty of these great masters are chiefly to be seen; but the Gallery in London is fortunate in possessing masterpieces of theirs, which once seen by a receptive soul must be held sacred forever in the memory. In the case of Leonardo da Vinci, however, there are but eight paintings in the world known to be his, none of which are in America; although his name is not infrequently inserted in the catalogues of public

galleries.* The National Gallery contains one of these eight—a noble one—while it also possesses a very beautiful composition of his—Christ Disputing with the Doctors—thought to have been executed by one of his pupils, Bernardino Luini.

This solitary picture of Leonardo's—Our Lady of the Rocks—is to me the painting of paintings of this great collection. For expression of tender love, soft gentle beauty, it stands first in my mind. Its inexpressible sweetness entered into my soul, and no matter how brief was any visit I made to the Gallery I could not leave without one loving look at the soulful face with its heavenly smile, bending as though in silent prayer over her Son. As often as I gazed upon this picture I felt that the soul of a pure loving woman is depicted—forgetting almost that a mortal hand brought it into existence. The painting is a soft rich brown, the figures firm, clear, perfect in outline, and of wonderful truth

* The following are the pictures : Our Lady of the Rocks, in the National Gallery, London ; Adoration of the Kings, in the Uffizi, Florence ; St. Jerome, in the Vatican, Rome ; The Last Supper (wall painting), in Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan ; Mona Lisa, the Holy Family, with St. Anne, John the Baptist, and Vierge aux Rochers, in the Louvre, Paris. The last picture is similar to that in the National Gallery, but I do not retain so pleasing a memory of it.

of tone and beauty of expression. The foreground is a marvel of skill—flowers and low shrubbery. The Mother is seated on a rock, and grouped around her are the Infant Christ with a cross, His hands clasped as if in benediction, with the young John and his mother seated on the ground in the attitude of listening. A beautiful family group! In the background, through a rift in the rocks, is a glimpse of the far-off sea, at once calling to the lips the question of Rosetti's sonnet :

And is that outer sea
Infinite imminent eternity ?

The rocks in the background are not just like those one sees in nature, and one will not be amiss in the inference that Leonardo's skill in landscape was not equal to that in portraiture. As a portrait-painter it is acknowledged that he surpasses all others, before or since his day. It would be well now to recall our starting-point, the grim, gaunt Madonna of Margaritone, if we would fully appreciate the advance made in the art of painting, above all in the art of painting the soul. Leonardo's creation may well stand as a wonderful conception of ideal womanhood—the perfection of pictorial modelling in light and shade—the soulful flower of art.

Leonardo was born in 1452 at Vinci, near Florence. He early showed an aptitude for drawing and painting, and his father, a lawyer, apprenticed him to an artist—Verrocchio. The youth gave himself to study with an industry and earnestness prophetic of coming greatness. He rapidly mastered the sciences and art of his time, displaying an almost incredible universality of mind. The knowledge and accomplishments of this man stagger belief. He became not only a great painter, but a sculptor, architect, poet, musician, mathematician, engineer, chemist, botanist, anatomist, astronomer, and skilled in mechanics and the facts of Natural History. He was an adept in riding and fencing, and a favorite in society. His strong purpose in life gave him such confidence that he declared: "I can do what can be done as well as any man." It is said that he undertook too much and finished too little. He was always striving after the perfection to which he was conscious he never attained. His sketch-book was his inseparable companion, for he was ever noting down his observations. Kugler says that "Leonardo followed criminals to execution in order to witness the pangs of despair, and invited peasants to his house and told them

laughable stories that he might pick from their faces the essence of comic expression."

Leonardo was for fourteen years Court painter at Milan, where he founded the Milanese school of painting. It was here that he produced his masterpiece—one of the eight to which I referred—The Last Supper, with which the world is familiar through engravings of it. The original is done in oil upon the plastered walls of a Dominican Convent in Milan. The colors have faded on the damp and crumbling plaster, but what is now left of the painting is carefully protected, and constitutes one of the choicest treasures of that city of

The chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazoned fires.

The general opinion of the masters of art criticism is that Leonardo's ideal of the Christ, as seen in this painting, is the very highest ever realized in human art, and his ideals of the apostles the truest and noblest. Wordsworth, in a note to his sonnet on the original picture, says in reference to two engravings of it exhibited in London: "In the original is a power which neither of these works has attained, or even approached."

When Leonardo returned to Florence he found Michael Angelo on the wave of popularity as the great painter. It was with little favor that he looked upon this young man, twenty-three years his junior, making use of many new phases of art which Leonardo's genius had originated. It was to Michael Angelo that he used the sarcasm so familiar to us: "I was famous before you were born." These artists did, however, compete for fresco work, which for some reason was never executed. The cartoons for this work were long the inspiring models for younger artists. Both were called to Rome by Leo X., but as they were unable to work in harmony Leonardo left Rome and Italy forever. The remainder of his life was spent in France in the employ of Francis I. He died at Cloux at the age of sixty-seven.

As I have said, his paintings are few in number, but they are sufficient to prove his transcendent art. He could model in light and shade. He was not so supreme in color. The emotions of the soul, its sweetness, the smile of inward happiness, found in him their great portrayer. You will read with interest one of

Leonardo's sonnets. The translation is Samuel Waddington's :

Who would, but cannot—what he can should will.
'Tis vain to will the thing we ne'er can do ;
Therefore that man we deem the wisest who
Seeks not mere futile longing to fulfil.
Our pleasure, as our pain, dependeth still
On knowledge of will's power ; this doth imbue
With strength who yield to duty what is due,
Nor reason wrest from her high domicile.
Yet what thou canst not always shouldst thou will,
Or gratified thy wish may cost a tear,
And bitter prove what seemed most sweet to view ;
Last in thy heart this truth we would instil,—
Wouldst thou to self be true, to others dear,
Will to be able, what thou oughtst, to do.

Let us now see what we can find of the work of Michael Angelo, the great sculptor-painter. As his paintings were mostly done in fresco, they are to be seen in their glory in the chapels of Florence and Rome. He did very few easel pictures, and there are but two of them in the Gallery — The Entombment of Christ, and The Holy Family. The former is quite unfinished, and one can the better obtain from it some idea of the way in which the master worked. The composition is of seven figures hardly of life size. Two beloved disciples, with Mary Magdalene, are carrying the body of

Christ, supported by a twisted sheet, up a winding flight of steps to the tomb prepared by Joseph. The tomb is seen among the rocks in the background. Some of the figures are only in outline, and none are finished ; but even in the chalk lines there is great strength and mastery of form, and they suggest to me more of the sculptor than painter. A glance at the dead Christ forcibly tells how the old unscientific but devotional art has passed away, for the opportunity is seized to display the most correct knowledge of anatomy. This is one of the very few paintings in which he used oil, a medium he did not like—in fact, he declared easel painting in oil to be “fit only for women and idle men.”

The Holy Family is done in distemper on wood. The picture is quite small, about three and a half feet high and two and a half wide. Here is the group—the Mother seated in the centre, having an open book, which she withholds from the Child standing beside her with His hand upon it—the prophetic writings in which His sufferings are foretold,—behind Him is the child Baptist, and beside them are angels examining a scroll—“which things the angels desire to look into.” The eager faces of the

angels are intense with love, pity and sadness. All the figures are full and strong in drawing, and the shading is so perfect that they seem almost to stand out from the surface. Rosetti has a short poem suggested by this picture, beginning:

Turn not the prophet's page, O Son !

Michael Angelo Buonarroti, for this is his full name, was a Tuscan, born at Caprese, near Florence, in 1475, while his father was governor of the castle. Apprenticed to Ghirlandajo, an artist remarkable for his skill in portraiture, his command of the technical processes of painting and the brilliant coloring of his frescos, the lad of thirteen remained with his master three years. Like Leonardo, he was a universal genius, though his strongest work was done as a sculptor, and as such he was patronized by the great family of the Medici. Rome is the treasury of his best works. It was after his first visit there that he executed, on his return to Florence, his colossal statue of David, a cast of which, you will remember, we studied with so much interest in the South Kensington Museum.

In Michael Angelo's fortieth year the Pope

wished him to carry on the decoration already begun in the Sistine Chapel. Up to this time he had given much more attention to sculpture than painting, and it was prophesied by some of the interested artists of the day that his work in the Sistine would prove a failure. The task set him was a most difficult one, and he entered upon it very reluctantly, suggesting that Raphael, who was now quite famous, should be entrusted with the work. Designs representing the Creation, Fall and Redemption of man were to be made and painted upon the vaulted chapel ceiling, one hundred and fifty feet in length and fifty in breadth. Michael Angelo engaged a number of artists from Florence to assist him, but being dissatisfied with their work he dismissed them all, and, erasing what they had done, shut himself up, allowing no intrusion. In four or five years this stupendous work of art was completed to the satisfaction of all, and he was enthusiastically acknowledged a painter of the first rank. This is considered his masterpiece, combining his genius as architect, sculptor and painter, and the figures of the prophets and sibyls the most majestic and powerful paintings in existence. The whole contains over two hundred figures larger than life.

When he was upwards of sixty years old he received a commission to finish the decoration of the Sistine Chapel. It was then he painted *The Last Judgment*, an altar-piece forty-seven feet high and forty-three wide. Between seven and eight years were given to this picture. The subject afforded him scope to depict with the power of his masterful hand the deepest and most terrible emotions of the human soul. The work is universally adjudged to be a marvellous effort of human skill, yet inferior in beauty to the paintings on the vaulted ceiling.

Though he decorated other chapels, the greatest of the productions of his brush are in the Sistine. The dome of St. Peter's and the Capitol with its picturesque group of buildings are among the monuments of his architectural skill, though he did not live to see the dome of the great cathedral entirely completed. Italy, at this period, was again stirred with religious thought and emotion, roused by the preaching of Peter Martyr. Michael Angelo felt the influence of Martyr's crusade, and doubtless many of his grand subjects were inspired by it. In the opinion of critics, boldness, vigor and mastery of form are combined in this great artist above all others. It has

been said of him that his women are female men and his children diminutive giants. Raphael thanked God that he was born in the days of Michael Angelo; and Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first president of the Royal Academy of Art, said of him as a painter that "to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for one ambitious man." The finest modern sculptures are also by his hand. Indeed he equally excelled in the sister arts of sculpture, architecture and painting. The energy, strength and dignity of Michael Angelo's work were a true expression of his sterling principles and massive character. Though he spent the greater portion of his life within the circle of a base and intriguing court, he ever preserved his self-respect and lofty moral ideals. He died in Rome in his eighty-ninth year, leaving this simple will, "I bequeath my soul to God, my body to the earth, and my possessions to my nearest relatives." His body lies in the Church of Santa Croce, Florence. Like Leonardo, he was a poet, and poetic justice seems to require that I should add one of his sonnets also. It is addressed to the Supreme Being. The translation is by Wordsworth :

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray :
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed :
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where Thou say'st it may ;
Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,
No man can find it : Father ! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread ;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.

The ridge, or bar, noticeable over the brows
of Michael Angelo in portraits of him, is with
singular beauty attributed by Tennyson, in the
"In Memoriam," to Arthur Hallam. The lyric
refers to their college days :

Who but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free
From point to point with power and grace,
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,
And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly wise ;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

Of Raphael and Titian I must speak in my
next.

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—Let us enter the large room over the door of which is written UMBRIAN SCHOOL. Here are many beautiful paintings, nearly all of them of a sacred character, for the religious enthusiasm of the Middle Ages lingered in this school long after it had, in a measure, disappeared elsewhere. Ruskin says the artists of this school “impress on their landscapes perfect symmetry and order, such as may seem consistent with the spiritual nature they would represent. The trees grow straight, equally branched on each side, and of slight and feathery frame. The mountains stand up unscathed, the waters are always waveless, the skies always calm.” How soft and rich the colors are! There are five of Raphael’s paintings here, representing the three different stages or styles of his work.

When Leonardo da Vinci was a young man of thirty-one, and Michael Angelo a boy of eight, Raphael Santi, or Sanzio, first saw the light on the borders of Umbria and Tuscany,

in the ducal city of Urbino amid the Apennines—1483. Doubtless he inherited something of his genius from his father, who was a painter of some note. From him he received his first instruction, and it is recorded that he actually took part in many of his father's paintings, though he was but eleven years old when his father died. His mother had died three years before. For a time his young life was shadowed, and there seemed little prospect of his continuing the studies his father had planned for him. Fortunately a kind uncle took pity on the orphan boy, and a year after his father's death sent him to the studio of Perugino, chief of the Umbrian artists and then at the height of his popularity. The master, looking over some of the lad's drawings, at once recognized his genius and exclaimed: "Let him be my pupil, he will soon become my master." Raphael remained with him till he was twenty-one, and this picture, *The Vision of a Knight*, is one painted by him during this first or Perugian period. It is one of his earliest known works, done when he was about seventeen. It is on wood, and is, I should say, about seven inches square. The subject is one that seems naturally to embody the forecast of an ardent young soul eagerly

peering into the future to see what life holds for him,—suggesting perhaps a turning-point in his own young life. The youthful knight sleeps upon his shield under a laurel tree—the leaves of which are emblematical of honor and renown. Dreaming of his future he sees two figures before him between whom he must make his choice. The one on his left, draped in crimson, offers him a book and a sword, significant of a life of study and conflict. The other, younger, with a fairer countenance, gaily decked with ribbons and coral wreaths, offers him a spray of blooming myrtle—"myrtle dear to Venus."

Florence was at this time the art-centre of the world, and thither hasted young Raphael, eager to improve himself by studying the great masters of his day. He studied with patience and enthusiasm the works of Leonardo and Michael Angelo, particularly the rival cartoons to which I referred in my last letter, and the works of other famous artists. During this period he produced the *Ansidei Madonna*, considered one of the greatest treasures of the National Gallery, and one of the noblest pictures in the world. It was painted for the *Ansidei* family at Perugia, from whom it takes its name. I would characterize the picture

as somewhat rigid and conventional in design. The Mother is seated on a canopied throne, over the head of which are the words, "Salve Mater Christi." She holds the young Child in her right arm, and on her left knee is an open book, to which she is directing His attention. Behind the throne is an arch through which appears the clear blue sky, and on each side of the throne stands a saint—one with upturned face of holy joy, the other devoutly reading. The colors are soft, rich and harmonious, but there is lacking in the face of the Mother the heavenly sweetness of Leonardo's Lady of the Rocks. The influence of the Umbrian school is clearly seen in this picture, though it belongs to his second or Florentine period. It is obviously a connecting link between the styles of the Umbrian and Florentine schools. Were it not rash in me I should frankly say that, apart from the melody of colors, there is little in this world-renowned painting, for which the British Government paid the sum of seventy thousand pounds, that stirred me or in any way satisfied me. As often as I sat before it studying its composition and real expressiveness, I turned from it with a feeling of relief to admire another of Raphael's that hangs near by.

This latter picture, St. Catharine of Alexandria, belongs to the same Florentine period, but of later date, and one can detect the influence of Leonardo in the expressive face, and of Michael Angelo in the full-rounded figure that stands out so life-like against the landscape background. Catharine of Alexandria was one of the favorite saints with the Italian artists. She is always pictured with a book, sword and wheel. The legend of her which the crusaders brought from the east was of a princess great in learning and wisdom, and a devout Christian. She shut herself up in her palace and gave herself to the study of Christian philosophy. Her people wished her to marry a prince who should lead them forth to battle, but she declined to conform to their wishes. The heathen tyrant, Maxentius, about 311, ordered her to be crushed with a wheel. The legend runs that fire came down from heaven and broke the wheel in pieces, but the tyrant scourged her with rods and beheaded her with a sword. There is another legend of her which says that in revenge for the discomfiture of a company of heathen philosophers, with whom she had been compelled to dispute, she was bound to a wheel in such a way that every turn of the wheel caused the

spikes to pierce her body. The wheel was miraculously broken, though she died a martyr. Raphael has given her a most beautiful face, with an expression of quiet resignation and strong faith. With lips parted in the surcease of pain, she looks up to heaven, whence rays of light stream down upon her. With her left arm she leans upon the cruel wheel, and her right hand is pressed upon her bosom as if to say, "I am ready to be offered, O Lord." The picture is noble every way, and one of the most impressive in the Gallery.

In his twenty-fifth year Raphael was called to Rome by Julius II., where he spent twelve years, or the remainder of his life, doing mostly fresco work in the Vatican. Michael Angelo at this time was painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and his works were then exciting intense enthusiasm throughout Italy. Raphael felt strongly the influence of Angelo's personality, so much so indeed that it seemed almost to check for a time the free play of his own genius. Fortunately his power of assimilating the best of what he saw enabled him to preserve a style distinctively his own. The first room he painted in the Vatican is called Theology, or The Dispute on the Sacrament. The Pope

was so delighted with it that he issued an order for all the old decorations to be removed that Raphael might paint the walls anew. Raphael, however, felt so much reverence for his predecessors' work, some of which had been done by his old teacher Perugino, that he remonstrated against such wholesale destruction, and was able to retain at least a part, adapting his own to what was already there. This is the last work done in his Florentine style.

Here is a small Madonna picture some fifteen inches high and thirteen wide, called the Garvagh Madonna, from Lord Garvagh, its former owner. It is a gem, so perfect in drawing, rich and beautiful in color, light and shade! There is nothing of the stilted, conventional manner of the Ansidei. The mother is just a beautiful human mother, and the children like other beautiful children, and they are playing with a pink. The only hint of the supernatural are very thin circles of light, or halos, above the heads. This picture is an example of his later style, the third or Roman. One of the many portraits which he painted during this period was the far-famed one of Julius II., the replica of which is in the Gallery. The original is in

the Pitti Palace, Florence. The third style of Raphael's is now known as that of the Roman school of painting.

Raphael did many more easel pictures than either Michael Angelo or Leonardo, and the number and extent of his frescoes are marvellous. One of the most famous of his frescoes is *The School of Athens* in one of the rooms of the Vatican. It represents an assembly of fifty-two ancient philosophers, surrounded by their disciples in a lofty arched hall, the architecture of which is counted one of the most skilful perspective paintings in existence. This great work portrays the historical development of Greek philosophy—by the choice and arrangement of the figures. The Pope expressed much satisfaction with it, and an art critic says of it: "With us art-indigents of later times satisfaction is intensified to almost boundless admiration." The Madonnas of Raphael are numerous and renowned, but his *di San Sisto*, the glory of the Dresden Gallery, is generally acknowledged to be the most perfect picture in the world.

I saw those wonderful cartoons of Raphael's at South Kensington. The Pope, wishing to substitute woven tapestries for paintings around

the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel, commanded him to furnish drawings to the Flemish weavers. You will remember that the subjects of Michael Angelo's frescoes on the ceiling are the Creation, Fall and Redemption of Man. In his cartoons for the wall tapestries, Raphael continued the history of God's dealings with man, taking his subjects from the lives of the apostles Peter and Paul, and from Stephen, the first Christian martyr,—The miraculous Draught of Fishes, Christ's charge to Peter, Peter and John healing the Lame Man, The Death of Ananias, Elymas the Sorcerer struck Blind, Paul and Barnabas at Lystra and Paul Preaching at Athens. These are the seven large cartoons. There were ten in all, but three are lost—The Martyrdom of Stephen, The Conversion of Paul and Paul in Prison. The tapestries woven after these designs and, exhibited in Rome two years before Raphael's death have had a singular history. Once they were carried off as spoils of war by French soldiers, but after a few years were restored. Over two hundred years after they were stolen by some Jews, and one was burned for the gold in it; but in 1808 they were redeemed by Pius VII., and are now in the Vatican. The cartoons have an eventful history

too. In 1630, Rubens, the great Flemish painter, discovered them in the manufactory at Arras, where the tapestries were woven, cut into strips for the weaver's use. He gave a glowing description of them to Charles I., and induced him to purchase them for his Whitehall Palace. After Charles' death Cromwell bought them for the nation for the sum of £300. Louis XIV. tried in vain to procure them. They remained neglected and almost forgotten till the time of William III., when the strips were pasted together upon linen and placed in a room in Hampton Court Palace, built purposely for them by Sir Christopher Wren. A few years ago the Queen had them placed in the South Kensington Museum. One viewing the cartoons would never suppose that they had once been cut into strips, so skilfully have the parts been joined together.

In his short life Raphael produced two hundred and eighty-six pictures, and five hundred and seventy-six drawings and studies, besides the frescoes in the Vatican and elsewhere. He also excelled in sculpture and architecture, succeeding Bramante as architect for St. Peter's, though he did not live long enough to carry out his design. The last and greatest of his oil

paintings, The Transfiguration, was unfinished when he was prostrated by fever and died on the thirty-seventh anniversary of his birth. This painting, with the colors still wet, was carried in the funeral procession, and it is now one of the most valued possessions of the Vatican. All Europe mourned his death, for he was known not only as the Prince of Painters, but his amiable and unselfish nature had made him every man's friend. His works, says Kugler, were regarded with veneration, as if God had revealed himself through Raphael as of old through the prophets. Like Leonardo and Michael Angelo he wrote many short poems, which unhappily are lost. You may perhaps recall Browning's lines :

Raphael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas. . . .
You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple,
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world cried too, "Ours the treasure" !
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

I have left all too little time for a visit to Room VII., where are five paintings by Titian,

who stands at the head of the Venetian school. One thing is specially noticeable here, the predominance of mythological subjects over sacred ones, though three of Titian's are of a religious character. The subjects of these three are, The Holy Family; The Repose, which is intended for another Holy Family—in the distance is seen the angel appearing to the shepherds, the picture being signed "Tician"; and Noli Me Tangere, Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection.

This latter picture is by far the most interesting of the three. The rosy hues of morning are flushing the distant hills, but the shadows still lie on the middle slopes. In the foreground is Mary weeping; hearing her name called she has fallen forward with outstretched hand as if to touch the risen Christ. He is represented as a gardener, having a hoe in His hand, and seems gently to repel her attempt to touch Him. The mythological subjects are Venus and Adonis, and Bacchus and Ariadne. This last, in addition to its poetical beauty, is a splendid example of Titian's coloring. As a colorist he surpasses, in the judgment of critics, each of the three masters of whom I have written, and one has little difficulty in accepting this dictum. Titian

was but two years younger than Michael Angelo, having been born at Capo del Cadore in 1477. Tradition has it that when very young he made attempts at painting, using the juice of flowers. He was only nine when sent by his parents to Venice to study art. For a time he was with Gentile Bellini, but left him to study with the more eminent brother, Gian. On the death of his master, being then thirty-five years old, he was commissioned by the Venetians to continue the works in the great Council Hall, which Gian Bellini had left unfinished.*

*The following, discovered by Rawdon Brown in the archives of Venice, is the petition of Titian when he offered his services to the Venetian Senate :

"Most Illustrious Council of Ten ; Most Serene Prince and Most Excellent Lords : I, Tician of Serviete de Cadore, having from my boyhood upwards set myself to learn the art of painting, not so much from cupidity of gain as for the sake of endeavoring to acquire some little fame, and of being ranked among those who now profess the same art. And although heretofore, and likewise at this present, I have been earnestly requested by the Pope and other Potentates to go and serve them, nevertheless being anxious as your Serenity's most faithful subject, for such I am, to leave some memorial in this famous city ; my determination is, should the Signory approve, *to undertake, so long as I live, to come and paint in the Grand Council with my whole soul and ability* ; commencing, provided your Serenity think of it, with the battle-piece on the side towards the 'Piazza,' that being the most difficult ; nor down to this time has anyone chosen to assume so hard a task. I, Most Excellent Lords, should be better pleased to receive as recompense for the work to be done by

He also held the office of la Sanseria, which obliged him to paint the portraits of the Doges, of which he painted five. He died at the age of ninety-nine, working at his art to the very last, declaring at the close of his life that he was only beginning to understand what painting

me, such acknowledgments as may be deemed sufficient, and much less; but because, as already stated by me, I care solely for my honor, and mere livelihood, should your Serenity approve, you will vouchsafe to grant me for my life, the next broker's patent in the German factory, by whatever means it may become vacant; notwithstanding other expectancies; with the terms, conditions, obligations and exemptions, as in the case of Messer Juan Bellini; besides two youths whom I purpose bringing with me as assistants; they to be paid by the Salt office; as likewise the colors and all other requisites, as conceded a few months ago by the aforesaid most Illustrious Council to the said Messer Juan; for I promise to do such work and with so much speed and excellency as shall satisfy your Lordships, to whom I humbly recommend myself."

And this is the acceptance by the Senate:

"We, Chiefs of the Most Illustrious Council of Ten, tell and inform you Lord Providitors for the State; *videlicet* the one who is cashier of the Great Chest, and his successors, that for the execution of what has been decreed above in the most Illustrious Council aforesaid, you do have prepared all necessities for the above-written Tician according to his petition and demand, and as observed with regard to Juan Bellini, that he may paint *ut supra*; paying from month to month the two youths whom said Tician shall present to you at the rate of four ducats each per month, as urged by him, because of their skill and sufficiency in said art of painting, though we do not mean the payment of their salary to commence until they begin work; and thus will you do. Given on the 8th of June, 1513."

is. His many works enrich the great cities of Europe. Christ and the Tribute Money, in the Dresden Gallery, is accounted especially beautiful. The Gallery at Madrid contains forty of his easel pictures, that at Vienna thirty-four, and the Louvre at Paris eighteen, but his masterpieces are in the Churches and Galleries of Venice. I am not aware that Titian wrote sonnets, like his three great compeers, but I can assure you there was poetry in his brush.

In my second letter I referred to Venetian art as distinguished for exquisite open-air effects. One can readily imagine how a sensitive spirit would become suffused with the beauty of the flame, orange, rose, gold and azure which the skies and lagoons of Venice present almost daily to the eye. The mistress of the sea, of whom poets love to sing, lent the tints of the rainbow to the palette of her gifted sons. To one susceptible to the beautiful effects of color, these Venetian rooms have an unspeakable charm. The Bellini brothers, of whom I wrote in my second letter, were the first to give a special character to this school, and their pupils readily caught their spirit and soared even far beyond them in their search after the beautiful. There are many artists besides

Titian whom I should like to mention, who are represented in this room. Giorgione, who was a fellow-pupil of Titian in the school of Bellini, was the first to break the trammels of the early Venetian school. His pictures have a luminous glow and depth of coloring. Among the contemporaries of Titian, some being his pupils, were Paris Bordone, Il Moretto da Brescia, Correggio—though he was really of the school of Parma—and Giovanni Moroni. The portrait of A Tailor by the latter must arrest the attention of all who pass through these rooms, so life-like is the man standing at his table with shears in hand about to cut a piece of cloth. But the best known in the world of art, who stand the nearest to Titian, are Tintoretto—whom Ruskin, in his extravagance, places even beyond Titian—and Paul Veronese. All of these are well represented in the Gallery.

In closing, I wish to say a word respecting the decadence of art in the later Italian schools, examples of which are to be seen in Room XII., for unfortunately the high position which painting had so gloriously won was not maintained. There sprang up a school of Eclectics, the height of whose ambition was to select salient

features of existing styles and combine them into one. This proved fatal to true art, since it was thus deprived of originality, and consequently left without creative motive and inspiration. Then came the Mannerists, those who aimed to copy the peculiarities of the great masters. These were followed by the Naturalists, as opposed to both the former, but they degraded art till it became a medium for the representation of the follies and vulgarities of human life rather than a divine speech of souls moved by moral earnestness and uplifted by the noblest aspirations.



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